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IDENTIFICATION OF CRIMINALS

The Borstal System.—In an address delivered by Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, chairman of the English Prison Commission in London, March 27, he laid down the following principles which, he said, should underlie the system:

(1) That every young criminal was a potential good citizen up to the age of his civil majority if appropriate and wise means were applied to his reformation; (2) that the diminution of crime in this country was to be sought by the amendment of the individual and not by the terror of punishment; (3) that the element of time was essential if any progress was to be made in the reform of the individual; and (4) that there must be a length of sentence and detention which was not relative to the particular act committed, but to the perverted character of the young man, and that in order to supplement any work done by the prison authority there must be a strenuous and highly-organized After-Care Association to take the lad on discharge. J. W. G.

National Conference of Charities and Corrections.—The Thirty-eighth National Conference of Charities and Corrections was held in Boston, from June 7 to June 14. One of the meetings was devoted to the subject of "law-breakers," at which papers were read by Dr. William Healy of Chicago on "Mental Defects and Delinquency;" by Dr. James F. Jackson of Cleveland, on "Treatment of Misdemeanants," and by Mr. Arthur W. Towne of Albany, on "Organization of Systems of Probation and Parole." Another session was devoted to "Drunkenness," at which a report on "The Relation of the Liquor Question to the Labor Movement" was made by Mr. John Mitchell; a paper on "Scientific Aspects of Drunkenness," by Dr. S. M. Gregory, of the Bellevue (New York) Hospital; one by Prof. Hatton, of Western Reserve University, on the "Legal and Legislative Aspects of Drunkenness," and one by Miss Alice L. Higgins of Boston on "An Educative Campaign for the Prevention of Drunkenness," were read. J. W. G.

New Methods of Marking Criminals.—Dr. Icard of Paris, says the New York *Tribune*, has invented a new method of branding convicted criminals which will greatly aid in their subsequent identification. It consists in the injection under the skin of a small quantity of paraffin. This forms a slight hump, which remains the rest of the person's life without the least danger to his health. A detective arresting such a man, or even before arresting him, would, on feeling the hump, know him instantly for an old offender. No uninformed person need know that the small swelling was a mark of a previous conviction, and would take it to be a natural excrescence. Dr. Icard thinks that, in accordance with his scheme, a regular language of signs might be prearranged by means of the paraffin hump. Thus, for example, it would be agreed all over the world that the right shoulder blade should be reserved for operations upon confirmed criminals. The area thus defined would be divided into three parts. The upper would be reserved for "very dangerous" criminals, the middle for dangerous and the lower for less dangerous. J. W. G.

Medico-Legal Worth of Finger Prints.—In the *Archiv Fur Kriminal Anthropologie und Kriminalistik*, 1911, Bd. 40, S. 320-333, Prof. Dr. Lochte of Göttingen makes a valuable contribution to the literature of finger prints. After narrating how the use of the print first arose and has since been adopted

DOGS FOR POLICE PURPOSES

by the police authorities of numerous countries, he considers the subject quite fully under four headings. First, what is the form and appearance of finger prints, and what causes them? Second, how they can best be made apparent when not already visible. Third, how long they will remain visible upon glass and paper surfaces, and what is the best method of making them do so? Fourth, in what manner they can best be used to identify their originators?

He records numerous notable instances when finger prints have led to the identification and conviction of criminals, giving reference to the literature of the subject. He gives ample detailed information for the making of invisible finger prints to become apparent. His article is particularly full in the description of his experiments to ascertain how long imprints made in various manner upon different substances would so withstand various exposures to weathering as to either remain still visible or to be capable of being made so. Lastly, he directs how, through photography, the appearance of the imprints may be preserved and use made of them for the identification of their origins through comparison with similar imprints from known sources. Appended to the article is a very full bibliography of the literature of the subject.¹

¹Furnished by Dr. Bennett F. Davenport, Boston.

Use of Dogs for Police Purposes.—Some years ago Prof. Hans Gross, the distinguished Austrian criminologist, expressed the opinion that the dog could be trained for effective police service, and his belief has been realized. In Germany more than 400 police stations are now provided with "police dogs" (*Polizeihunde*) and the results have attracted wide attention. Recently the Japanese government sent a commission to Germany to study the police dog system, with a view to introducing it into Japan. A writer in one of the popular magazines thus describes the methods of the police dog:

"The police dog will follow his master on his round, will call his attention to anything suspicious, will locate hidden vagabonds, will hold a fugitive at bay and guard him during transportation, will defend his master against an attack, will rescue the drowning, hunt for lost articles, carry messages to the police station and return with an answer; in fact, he will display almost human intelligence, and his service will often be of greater help to his master than that of one or even two policemen. Experience has shown that an inconsiderate and curious crowd is the worst enemy of the police dog and the best ally of the criminal. Through untimely interference, a crowd often makes it extremely difficult, nay, impossible, for the dog to operate successfully. The training of the public is, therefore, of the same importance as that of the dog, if the animal is to be made efficient in his work.

"The following occurrence shows how a police dog of the German capital procured the evidence necessary for the conviction of a criminal, which human skill had been unable to obtain:

"In a village near Berlin fruit had frequently been stolen from different orchards. The police dog, Prinz, sent from Berlin to 'work up the case,' followed the track of the thief from the orchard to a pile of manure and then to a tenement house occupied by a number of imported farm hands. Taken into the house, the dog crept under a bed in the last room he entered and brought forth a shirt and a paper bag full of gooseberries. He then was taken out to the field where the residents of the tenement house were at work and immediately located the owner of the bed. Investigation showed that the shirt